

without a thrill the meeting of his Jason and
Medea in the
blackness of the Colchian Wood:

Obvius ut sera cum se sub nocte magistris
Impingit pecorique pavor, qualesve
profundum
Per Chaos occurrunt caecae sine vocibus
umbrae;
Haud secus in mediis nocris nemorisque
tenebris
Inciderant ambo attoniti juxtaque subibant;
Abietibus tacitis aut immotis cyparissis
Adsimiles, rapidus nondum quas miscuit
Auster.

Just as, when nights grow late, falls suddenly
Panic on herd and herdsman; or as when,
In depths of Chaos, dumb, blind phantoms
meet;
So in the midnight darkness of the wood
Those two drew near, and met, and stood
amazed;
Like noiseless firs or moveless cypresses
Ere wild South-western whirl them both in
one.

Of this kind was that silence of infinitude
before which
covered the lost soul of Pascal. But here we
approach the
borders of yet another province of silence—
that where
some menacing presence is replaced by a
Saharan empti-
ness, which even the sense of something
hostile would at
¹ least make less intolerably desolate,

Or again this silence of suspense, instead of
pressing
threateningly forward, or thinning into void
desolation,
may recede into the background, where it
remains as an
aloofly watching presence; so that the same
starry silence
which terrified Pascal, whispered with ironic
remoteness
to Emerson in moments of lost self-control:
'So hot, my
little sir?' Menace has given place to
impassivity. More
impassively still for Catullus the silence of
the constella-
tions looks down unmoved on the stolen
loves of men;

or for Theocritus, on his witch-maiden's love
for ever lost:

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Quiet lies die sea, and quiet all the winds;
But never quiet the anguish at my heart.